

Bowling Green State University

ScholarWorks@BGSU

National Center for Family and Marriage
Research Family Profiles

Sociology

2012

FP-12-15 Demographic Profile of Same-Sex Parents

Sarah Burgoyne

Bowling Green State University, sburgoy@bgsu.edu

Follow this and additional works at: https://scholarworks.bgsu.edu/ncfmr_family_profiles



Part of the [Family, Life Course, and Society Commons](#)

Repository Citation

Burgoyne, Sarah, "FP-12-15 Demographic Profile of Same-Sex Parents" (2012). *National Center for Family and Marriage Research Family Profiles*. 22.

https://scholarworks.bgsu.edu/ncfmr_family_profiles/22

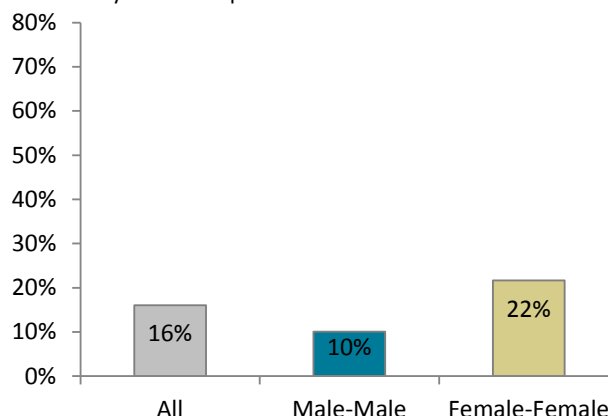
This Report is brought to you for free and open access by the Sociology at ScholarWorks@BGSU. It has been accepted for inclusion in National Center for Family and Marriage Research Family Profiles by an authorized administrator of ScholarWorks@BGSU.

Demographic Profile of Same-Sex Parents

Although same-sex couples (particularly male-male couples) are less likely to have children than opposite-sex couples, an increasing number of children live in same-sex couple households (Gates & Ost, 2004). This profile combines the 2010 American Community Survey 1-year population and housing records to present a demographic snapshot of same-sex parent households in the United States. The ACS is an ideal survey for estimating the small population of same-sex parents, given the large ACS sample size (Lofquist, 2012). The focus of this profile is on same-sex parent households, however, supplemental comparisons of opposite-sex parent households are also discussed.

- About 1 in 6 (16%) same-sex couple households include children (biological, step, or adopted).
- Male-male households (10%) are half as likely as female-female households (22%) to have children present (Figure 1).
- In contrast, 41% of opposite-sex couple households have children present (not shown).

Figure 1. Percentage of Same-Sex Couple Households with Children by Sex of Couple

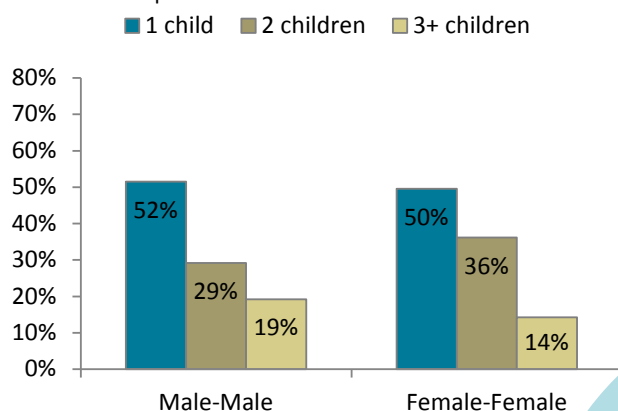


Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey, 1-Year Estimates, 2010

Number and Age of Children Among Same-Sex Parents

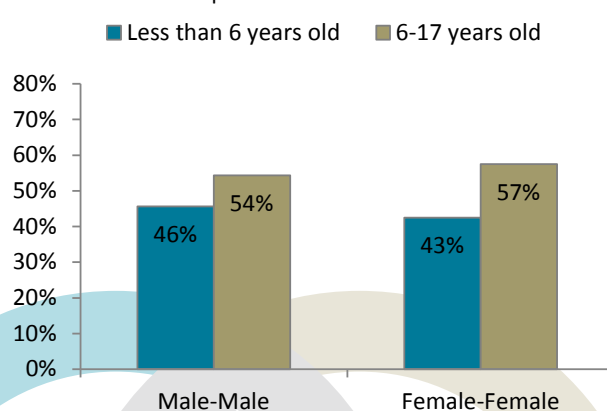
- Around half of same-sex parents (52% male-male and 50% female-female) have only 1 child in the household.
- Twenty-nine percent of male-male parents report having 2 children in the household compared to 36% of female-female parents.
- Slightly more male-male parents (19%) report having 3 or more children in the household than female-female parents (14%) (Figure 2).
- Only 39% of opposite-sex parents have 1 child in the household, 39% have 2, and the remaining 22% have 3 or more children in the household (not shown).
- Similar proportions of male-male parents (46%) and female-female parents (43%) report that their youngest child is less than 6 years old. (Figure 3).
- The age distribution is similar for opposite-sex parents: 46% have a youngest child less than 6 years old, while the remaining 64% report their youngest child is 6 to 17 years old (not shown).

Figure 2. Percentage of Same-Sex Parents by Number of Children and Sex of Couple



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey, 1-Year Estimates, 2010

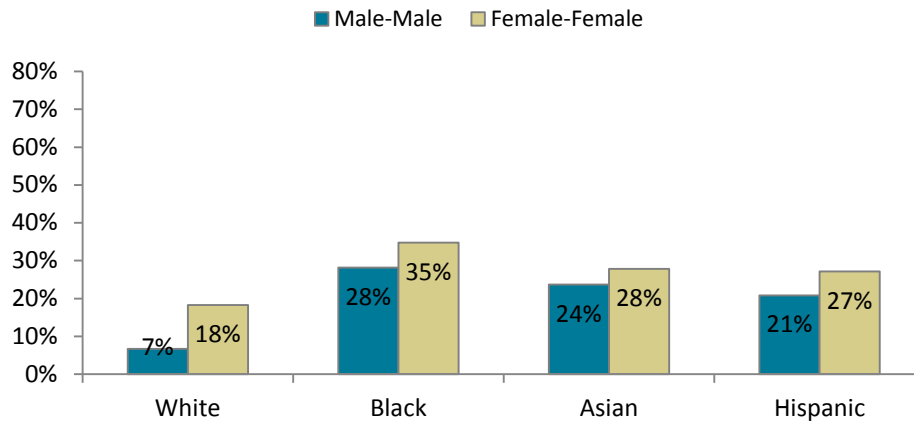
Figure 3. Percentage of Same-Sex Parents by Age of Youngest Child and Sex of Couple



Race/Ethnicity and Presence of Children in Same-Sex Households

- Fewer White same-sex couples report having children in the household than non-White same-sex parents. Only 7% of White male-male couples have children in the household (Figure 4). Similarly, fewer White opposite-sex couples (35%) have children in the household than their non-White counterparts (45-60%) (not shown).
- The presence of children in same-sex couple households is highest among Black female-female couples (35%). Among opposite-sex couple households, the presence of children is highest among Hispanic couples (60%) (not shown).

Figure 4. Percentage of Same-Sex Couple Households with Children by Sex of Couple and Race of Household Head

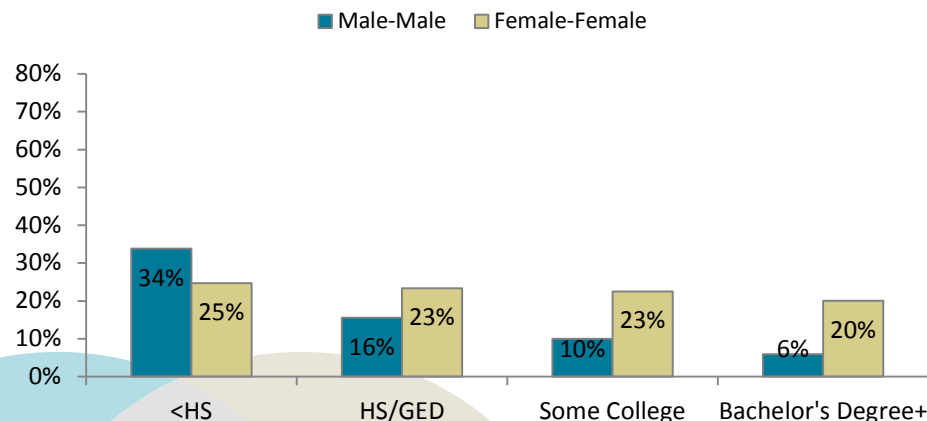


Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey, 1-Year Estimates, 2010

Education and Presence of Children in Same-Sex Households

- Similar proportions of female-female couples (20% - 25%) report having children in the household, regardless of education.
- There are stark educational differentials in the presence of children in male-male couple households. Among male-male couple households with low educational attainment (household head has less than a high school education), 34% have children. Comparatively, only 6% of male-male couple households in which the household head has at least a Bachelor's degree have children.
- An education gradient in the proportion of opposite-sex couple households with children does not exist. Yet a greater proportion of opposite-sex couples with a Bachelor's degree (43%) report having children in the household than their same-sex couple counterparts (13%).

Figure 5. Percentage of Same-Sex Couple Households with Children by Sex of Couple and Education of Household Head



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey, 1-Year Estimates, 2010

References

- Gates, G., & Ost, J. (2004). *The gay and lesbian atlas*. Washington, DC: Urban Institute. Press.
- Lofquist, D. (2012). *Proceedings from PAA 2012: Same-sex couples' consistency in reports of marital status*. San Francisco, CA.

Suggested Citation:
Burgoyne, S.
(2012).
Demographic
Profile of Same-Sex
Parents (FP-12-15).
National Center for
Family & Marriage
Research.
Retrieved from
http://ncfmr.bgsu.edu/pdf/family_profiles/file115683.pdf

This project was supported with a grant from the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Office of the Assistant Secretary for Planning and Evaluation, grant number 5 UOI AE000001-05. The opinions and conclusions expressed herein are solely those of the author(s) and should not be construed as representing the opinions or policy of any agency of the federal government.